

## 153<sup>rd</sup> AIRLIFT WING



### LINEAGE

153<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Interceptor Group activated, 1 Jul 1957  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Aeromedical Transport Group, 1 May 1961  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Air Transport Group (Heavy), 8 Feb 1964  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Military Airlift Group, 1 Jan 1966  
**Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Aeromedical Airlift Group, Oct 1968**  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Group, 13 Jul 1972  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Group, 15 Mar 1992  
Redesignated 153<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing,

### STATIONS

Cheyenne, WY

### ASSIGNMENTS

#### WEAPON SYSTEMS

##### Mission Aircraft

F-86L, 1958-1960  
C-119C, 1961-1963  
C-121G, 1963-1972  
C-130B, 1972  
C-130H

##### Support Aircraft

C-47, 1947-1963  
T-33, 1953-1960  
C-45, 1953-1961

### COMMANDERS

Col Roy E. Cooper  
Maj Vincent E. Casey, 1959

LTC Gerald T. Rowley, 1 May 1960  
LTC John P. Bee, 1966  
LTC Floyd E. Snyder  
LTC Joe Daly, Dec 1977  
LTC Lewis A. Wheeler, 1982  
Col Harold Reed  
Col Dennis Grunstad, 6 Dec 2009  
Col Stephen Rader, 9 Jul 2011

## **HONORS**

### **Service Streamers**

### **Campaign Streamers**

### **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

## **Decorations**

## **EMBLEM**

Or a fess azure debruising a rope garnished vert in the form of a lasso which encircles in Dexter Chief a torteau bearing an escutcheon azure surmounted by caricatured P-38 or in flight toward Dexter, with motor nacelles gules, and spinners argent having a skull or wearing a top hat sable in position of cockpit, with lightening flashes or issuing from mouth, in Sinister Chief on a plate bordured gules a bronc-buster riding a bucking horse in silhouette sable and in base on a plate bordured and inflamed to chief gules an evergreen tree fructed, and eradicated vert and sable, the fess charged with a Cheyenne Indian coup feather argent tipped sable garnished gules; all within a diminished bordure or. The emblem is symbolic of the group. The gold field alludes to the excellence required of assigned personnel, and the blue is symbolic of the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. The Cheyenne Indian coup feather is representative of the group's achievements and refers to its organization in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1957. The emblems in chief commemorate the group's historic 187th Fighter Bomber Squadron. The caricatured aircraft and skull in Dexter Chief, the squadron's World War II aircraft marking, refers to the squadron's WW II accomplishments and in Sinister Chief, the bucking bronco emblem of the squadron signifies their assignments to the Wyoming Air National Guard. The lasso, which also alludes to Wyoming, by its colors and design denotes the Belgian Gourragere awarded to the 187th Fighter Bomber Squadron during WW II, and the tree within the flaming red amulet symbolizes their distinguished unit citation received for action at Hurtgen Forest, Germany. The emblem bears the national colors and the Air Force colors, gold and ultramarine blue.

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

Beginning Aug. 9, 1990, the first day of OPERATION DESERT SHIELD, and into

OPERATION DESERT STORM the Wyoming Air Guard flew continental U.S. and Central and South America missions. During that time, the Wyoming 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Flight and the 153rd Clinic were both activated by order of the President of the United States, with a large number of those medical personnel being sent to Saudi Arabia. After the hostilities, Wyoming Guard members continued with OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT, which supplied humanitarian aid to Kurdish people displaced by the Iraqi military.

During 1993 and early 1994, the 153rd Airlift Group traded its C-130Bs for new C-130Hs, which greatly enhance the Wyoming unit's worldwide flying capabilities. From July 1993 through February 1994, the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, provided volunteer medical personnel for the Egypt/Somalia humanitarian effort in eastern Africa, OPERATION PROVIDE HOPE. Three of those medical personnel subsequently received commendations for saving US Army Rangers lives while under attack in Somalia in October 1993. During 1993-94, a number of Wyoming crews volunteered to fly missions into and over Bosnia/Serbia.

The years between the Gulf War and 2001 proved to be a period of continued activity for the Wyoming Air Guard. Major unit deployments included OPERATION UPHOLD DEMOCRACY (Haiti) in 1995, OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH (Iraq) in 1996 and 1998, OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR (Bosnia) in 1996, OPERATION SHINING HOPE (Bosnia) in 1999, OPERATION JOINT FORGE (Bosnia/Kosovo) in 1999, OPERATION CORONET OAK (Panama) in 2000, and the yearly MAFFS mission as directed.

During this same period numerous individuals volunteered for such missions as OPERATION SEA SIGNAL (Guantanamo, Haitian refugees) in 1995 and OPERATION NEW HOPE (El Salvador) in 1999, along with the missions listed above.

In April 1997 the Wyoming 153rd Airlift Wing was reassigned to the Air Mobility Command and continued its federal and state airlift, fire fighting, and humanitarian missions. From November 10 to December 5, 1997 the Wyoming Air National Guard flew 250 airborne fire-fighting missions in the jungles of Indonesia as OPERATION TEMPEST RAPID, No. 1. This was the first time U.S. airborne fire fighting had ever been done outside of the continental U.S.

As with the rest of the U.S. military, the wing's focus changed abruptly on Sept. 11, 2001. Responding immediately, by answering the call to ferry blood donations around the western United States. By the end of September virtually all of the 153rd Security Forces Squadron had been called to active duty and assigned to active Air Force bases. As a result numerous individuals volunteered to be activated as security forces augmentees, an assignment that lasted half a year for many. Three others volunteered for temporary civilian airport security duties.

In December 2001 the expected call up for more of the unit arrived. This resulted in five aircraft, their crews, and support personnel deploying to Oman as part of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM. During the unit's eight-month deployment, it flew 5,500 hours (including 4,000 combat hours in Afghanistan), and earned the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor. In addition, the unit's air traffic controllers served in Pakistan during this period.

As the Global War on Terrorism expanded to include operations in Iraq and continued operations

in Afghanistan, the 153rd Airlift Wing repeatedly answered the nations call. In addition to its ongoing commitment to MAFFS, Operation Joint Forge in Europe, and Coronet Oak in Latin America, the 153 AW maintained a two year long, two aircraft commitment to Operation Iraqi Freedom during 2004-2005. In 2000 and 2007 the unit returned to Afghanistan for two and three aircraft Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotations. On the home front, the end of 2007 found four aircraft responding to the great southern California wildfires.

In Cheyenne the period 2004-2007 witnessed the 153 AW receiving a remodeled dining facility, a new Petroleum Oils and Lubricants [POL] facility, a new air operations building for Air Traffic Control and Aerial Port, and approval of a new squadrons operations building. Numerous temporary modular buildings also supported the unit.

On 3 Sep 2005, the 153d Airlift Wing, Wyoming ANG, and the 145th Airlift Wing, North Carolina ANG, established the 153d Air Expeditionary Group at Pensacola NAS, Florida, to provide airborne firefighting capability for JTF-Katrina. To accomplish this mission, each unit deployed in Title 10 status and with its C-130 equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) to combat grass fires. The 153d Air Expeditionary Group was inactivated from federal service and returned to state control, 1 Nov 2005

Each year, the Wyoming ANG is federalized for Coronet Oak, a deployment in support of US Southern Command's movement of troops and equipment through Central and South America. The 153rd AW's personnel, both active duty and Guardsmen flew Coronet Oak missions in late 2006. This entailed two-week rotations of a pair of C-130s and 50 air and ground crew members. receive their combat arms training and carry out their administrative communications with the 463rd AG.

The 153rd has become the first Guard wing to gain operational control of an active duty unit. The unit is the 30th Airlift Squadron, formed last July with active duty members. Though the 30th AS is now just one of some 20 units under the 153rd AW, there is no doubt it is very much an active duty unit. Its members are still active duty personnel and are functionally under Air Mobility Command. Their training is different from the Air Guardsmen. The administrative control of 30th AS personnel is held by the active duty 463rd Airlift Group, in Little Rock AFB, Ark. This unit handles personnel issues such as promotions for these airmen, but everything else comes from the Air Guard. The 30th is the Air Force's first "active associate" squadron. USAF long has benefited from "reserve associates"— Air Force Reserve units affiliated with larger active duty wings. This new arrangement goes in the other direction. This particular setup required writing a new concept of operations addressing legal and operational challenges that have—and will—crop up. It took two years to hammer out. For months, the 30th AS has been in "the build-up phase," said Lt. Col. Steven Hopkins, commander of the 30th. The unit has been receiving taskings from the National Guard Bureau, but its activation will not be complete until this month. Then, it could start to receive AMC taskings for overseas deployments. By December, the active personnel flew through the first of three manning phases to become a fully deploy able unit, months ahead of schedule. It only took a month for the active duty crews to start flying with the Wyoming Guard crews on Wyoming airplanes. At that time, four air crews were fully integrated into wing operations and maintainer units at Cheyenne. The 30th's first group of 77 active duty airmen came from around the world—Pope AFB, N.C., Dyess AFB,

Tex., Little Rock AFB, Ark., Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, and Yokota Air Base in Japan. Most had experience with the C-130. By the end of this month, the squadron will have grown to 137 airmen, heading toward a goal of 180. Guardsmen now and always will far outnumber Cheyenne's active airmen. At present, the 153<sup>rd</sup> has 1,200 Guardsmen, 400 of whom are full-time. "We are just another squadron in the hierarchy of the 153rd AW," Hopkins said. The 30th AS participates in training, local flying, and all other missions it normally would perform while operating from an active base. The 30th has "melded into the wing," said a spokeswoman for the Wyoming Military Department. The spokeswoman said the state Guard's C-130 flights can be crewed with any mix of Guard and active duty members, depending on the mission and who is available. Individual active airmen can plug in and work in predominantly Guard crews. In November, for example, a C-130 crewed by Guardsmen and one active duty loadmaster air dropped a group of Navy SEALs into the area around Norfolk, Va., as part of a training exercise. A Push From BRAC Creation of an associate unit stemmed from the work of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission. It proposed, for the sake of efficiency, shifting four C-130Hs of the Idaho ANG's 124th Wing at Boise to the Wyoming Guard at Cheyenne, which already had eight. The sunk cost could be spread more effectively across a larger flying wing. It paired that recommendation with another—that an associate unit should be created, with active duty associating on the ANG aircraft. BRAC, the unit would support a Total Force USAF, which was contemplating active duty units commanded by Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve officers. First, the service gets a chance to season some of its young, active duty airmen by associating them on a day-to-day basis with older and more experienced Guard members. "The vast majority of our [Guard] maintainers are a little older and a little more experienced," said Brig. Gen. Charles V. Ickes II, deputy director of the Air National Guard in Washington. "They will more rapidly [give] experience [to] the young active duty folks." Second, the Air Force can make fuller use of all of its Total Force mobility assets—specifically, Guard C-130s. Active duty airmen will gain greater access to Guard airplanes. This is necessary because USAF cannot buy more C-130s (at \$90 million) Another factor in Cheyenne's favor was its proximity to F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo., an active duty base. Airmen go there for medical, commissary, family support, schooling, and similar needs. One problem stemmed from different views of scheduling and working hours. Guard personnel tend to work a traditional eight-hour day. Active personnel do not, instead putting in extra hours or working late to finish a job. The way the active force schedules its work "does not take into consideration the [Guard's] technician ... force," said a Guardsman. Title 10 covers federal missions, applying to both active and reserve forces, while Title 32 applies to the National Guard operating under state control but performing duties of federal interest, such as responding to a terrorist attack. In both cases, funding comes from the federal coffers. Under current law, Guard officers in Title 32 status cannot command Title 10 forces. And, to be in Title 10 status, a Guardsman must be called to active duty. Then there is the third status in which Guard forces operate solely in state service under control of the governor and financed by the state. Governors usually employ their Guard forces in this status to handle such things as natural disaster relief. When Wyoming calls upon the 153rd AW in its state role, the unit's active duty airmen may also participate but they're still paid by Uncle Sam. "If Governor Freudenthal wants the Guard to deliver hay, the active duty airmen could join [in]," Hopkins said. AMC, and not the Guard, pays any extra costs incurred by the 30th AS. This could include building more practice airdrop loads for training or laying on additional flying hours. For office supplies and computers, "we have developed a fair share system" by splitting the cost, Hopkins remarked. The 153rd AW is responsible for all infrastructure bills needed to operate the

C-130s. The main operations building once housed just a few Guardsmen. Now, it is crammed with desks, chairs, computers, filing cabinets, and boxes that fill up not only offices but also hallways. Plans call for a new operations building with office space totaling 37,000 square feet—14,000 of which were belatedly added to accommodate the new active forces. The completion date has been set at summer 2008. The project will be jointly funded; ANG will provide \$9 million, and AMC will pony up at least \$3.2 million. SMSgt. Rick McKean, a 30th AS flight engineer, believes the differences between Guard and active duty have nothing to do with actually flying the airplane and everything to do with differing procedures on the ground. "We push the same buttons and do the same things to get the knobs turned and the airplane airborne," McKean explained. "The big difference for us is getting from inside the building to the airplane. There's different steps and different procedures." Procedures differ on everything from checking out a helmet to organizing and cleaning a shop. Hopkins noted the cleanliness of the Guard's buildings and equipment. This, he said, stemmed partly from pride of ownership and partly from having more time for spruce ups. Three Guard crew chiefs have watched all eight of the 153rd's airplanes come off the assembly line, and they take excellent care of these airplanes, Hopkins said.

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Air Force Order of Battle

Created: 7 Sep 2010

Updated:

#### Sources

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